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Title:

Statement: Whyalla shipyards

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STATEMENT

from the Premier

Date... December 9, 1976....

Embargo.....

3118 139

State Administration Centre,
Victoria Square, Adelaide,
South Australia 5001
228 4811

WHYALLA SHIPYARDS

The Federal Government's failure to respond to the proposals of the South Australian Government for support of the shipbuilding industry is part of a political programme by which the Federal Government apparently intends to allow the industry to close down without further help, but to endeavour to shift the blame for that closure to other groups and Governments. Mr. Fraser and Mr. Lynch are trying to shift the responsibility onto everyone other than the Federal Government.

Mr. Fraser has refused to include the South Australian Government in talks concerning the future of the shipbuilding industry, although the major shipbuilding facility in Australia is in South Australia, and the South Australian Government has a very considerable stake in Whyalla. The Federal Government has, however, been prepared to talk to the New South Wales State Government, the ACTU and the Broken Hill Proprietary Group. Mr. Fraser's present ploy is to make demands upon Trades Unions and upon the N.S.W. Government which, on the face of them, are impossible to accept and are clearly designed to be so. He refused to talk to South Australia until he has an answer from New South Wales upon the matters he has put to that State.

Unlike other countries, such as Sweden, whose Government is heavily subsidising its shipyards to continue to build ships for stock, the Federal Government appears to have no proposals to sustain the shipbuilding industry in this country. It simply appears to be going through an exercise to try to convince the public that the demise of an industry for which it is clearly responsible, is in fact the fault of workers or the Labor Government of New South Wales.

The South Australian Government has shown that the Industries Assistance Commission's report is wrong, that Australia could still sustain a major shipyard, that the best future for Australian shipbuilding is for major shipbuilding to take place at Whyalla and for major ship repair to take



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place at Newcastle, and that the industry can be sustained economically with less subsidy than is being provided in other comparable countries.

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